

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Investigations of the Ichthyofauna of  
Nicaraguan Lakes

Papers in the Biological Sciences

---

1976

## Carcharhinus Nicaraguensis, a Synonym of the Bull Shark, C. Leucas

Henry B. Bigelow  
*Harvard University*

William C. Schroeder  
*Harvard University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ichthynicar>



Part of the [Aquaculture and Fisheries Commons](#)

---

Bigelow, Henry B. and Schroeder, William C., "Carcharhinus Nicaraguensis, a Synonym of the Bull Shark, C. Leucas" (1976). *Investigations of the Ichthyofauna of Nicaraguan Lakes*. 36.  
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ichthynicar/36>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Papers in the Biological Sciences at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Investigations of the Ichthyofauna of Nicaraguan Lakes by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.



Most widely known of the fishes of Lake Nicaragua is the "freshwater shark", once thought to be landlocked, together with its batoid relative, the sawfish, *Pristis perotteti*. The bull shark, *Carcharhinus leucas*, of a Nicaraguan postage stamp series, is shown here with its original binomial.

Reprinted from COPEIA, 1961, No. 3, p. 359, September 22  
Printed in U. S. A.

*CARCHARHINUS NICARAGUENSIS*, A SYNONYM OF THE BULL SHARK, *C. LEUCAS*.—At the time we gave our accounts of these species (*Fishes of the Western North Atlantic*, No. 1, pt. 1, pp. 378–382; 337–346, respectively) we had some doubt as to whether the Lake Nicaragua shark should stand as a valid species or be considered a freshwater *leucas*. We state: "*Nicaraguensis* very closely resembles *leucas* by the following characters. The anterior margin of the eye is posterior to the front of the mouth by a distance equal to half its own diameter in *nicaraguensis* (a little anterior to front of mouth in *leucas*); the gill openings are relatively somewhat longer in *nicaraguensis*, the third being nearly as long as the distance between the nostrils (in *leucas* the third is a little less than half that long); the free tip of the second dorsal is about two-thirds as long as its base in *nicaraguensis* (only half that long in *leucas*)."

Dr. Royal D. Suttkus, of Tulane University, sent us a young female, 685 mm in total length, taken May 1, 1960, in Rio San Juan, Atlantic

drainage, ¼ mile upstream from Trinidad in fresh water. This specimen nullifies the characters supposedly separating *C. nicaraguensis* from *leucas* for (a) the anterior margin of its eye is anterior to the front of the mouth by a distance equal to 2/5ths its own diameter; (b) the third gill opening is a little less than half as long as the distance between the nostrils; and (c) the free tip of the second dorsal is half as long as the base of the second dorsal, all of which characters are present on such *leucas* material as we have examined.

Also, a jaw from a larger specimen (size not given) was received, taken near the mouth of Rio Sapoa at Lago de Nicaragua, February 13, 1960. Its dental formula is 13–1–13/12–1–12 both the upper and lower symphysis tooth being very small, as in *leucas*, nor could any of the teeth be distinguished from those of the latter. —HENRY B. BIGELOW AND WILLIAM C. SCHROEDER. *Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.*